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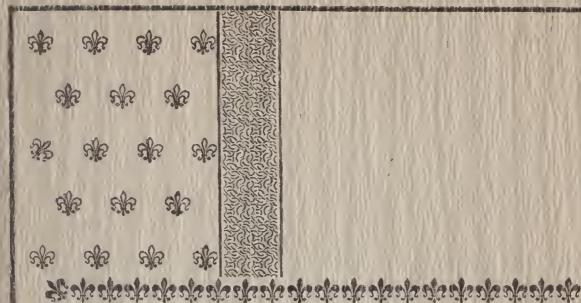












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An Original Comedy in Four Acts



HERBERT BASHFORD







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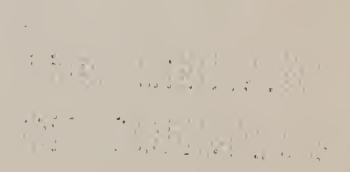
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HON. JOHN NORTH

An Original Comedy in Four Acts

BY HERBERT BASHFORD

Author of "Beyond the Gates of Care;" "The Wolves of the Sea, and Other Poems," etc.



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The Play.

The scenes of the four acts are laid at the home of Hon. John North, in Seattle, State of Washington.

Act I.—An early afternoon in September. Act II.—The morning of the next day. Act III.—Evening of the day following. Act IV.—Two hours later.

PERSONS IN THE PLAY.

Hon. John North, - - - Nominee for Governor Count Henri De Valois, - In search of an heiress Charles Dale, - - - - Of the Herald Johnnie, - - - - - A sower of wild oats Col. Henry Harrison Barnaby, - Who wore the blue Unity Jane, - - - - A domestic Mrs. John North, - - - An only daughter Mrs. Helen Delmar, - Formerly Mrs. John North

ACT I.

The scene represents the grounds of John North's residence in Seattle, Washington. Set tree L. Rustic seat underneath. House R. Trees and mountain in background.

Unity Jane discovered seated on rustic bench reading.

Unity (reading aloud)

Then-said-Lord-Robley-to-the-fair-Ellen-I-swear-by-the constant-stars-I-will-be-true-to-thee. A-tear-drop-glittered in-the-maiden's-eye—

Mrs. North, a matronly woman of about forty, appearing in the doorway.

Mrs. North (sharply)

Unity Jane?

Unity (reading aloud)

Said-she-I-will-drown-myself-in-the-moat-if-you-love-me not-

Mrs. North

Unity Jane?

Unity (reading)

Then-said-Lord-Robley--fly--with--me--on--my- coal--black steed—

Mrs. North (shaking Unity)

Unity Jane you're as deaf as an adder; don't you know it's getting late? The train will be here in five minutes. You must make haste and hurry up the lunch. These here novels don't edify anybody.

Unity (starting)

Yes mam I'm a-goin' (stops and reads) Darling--I--love--thee—

Mrs. North (angrily snatching the novel)

Then go this minute. You try my patience beyond measure. (Unity moves sullenly into the house. Mrs. North looks at book) I just knew she had lost my place; fool girl don't know what she's a readin' anyhow. (turns, as if to enter the house)

Mrs. Helen Delmar, a handsomely dressed woman with bleached hair, who attempts to appear youthful, enters C.

Mrs. Delmar (suavely)

Good morning.

Mrs. North.

How d'ye do.

Mrs. Delmar.

Have I the pleasure of addressing the Hon. Mrs. John North?

Mrs. North.

Yes, I'm her.

Mrs. Delmar.

My name is Delmar—Mrs. Helen Delmar. I called to see you in answer to your advertisement for a French teacher.

Mrs. North.

Oh, you seen it in last night's paper?

Mrs. Delmar.

Yes.

Mrs. North.

So you talk French, do you?

Mrs. Delmar.

Yes, I am a teacher of French.

Mrs. North.

Lived here long?

Mrs. Delmar.

Only a short time.

Mrs. North.

From Boston or Paris?

Mrs. Delmar.

Well, no; originally from New York, recently from South Dakota.

Mrs. North.

Dakoty? Did you say you was married?

Mrs. Delmar (laughing)

I was once, I am now a widow.

Mrs. North.

H'm. Dakoty makes lots of 'em.

Mrs. Delmar.

Yes, but not in my case. I lost my husband years ago.

Mrs. North.

Oh, he's dead, an' your hain't never married again?

Mrs. Delmar (with feigned emotion)

No, I have never felt that I could bring myself to marry again.

Mrs. North.

Well, you are allright. I'm just like you. I am dead set against second marriage, too. I guess you will do to learn my daughter French.

Mrs. Delmar.

Oh, then it is your daughter?

Mrs. North.

Yes, and I want her to learn it as rapid as possible. You see — well — Edith wouldn't like me to mention it — but — as long as you're goin' to be her French teacher, I don't mind tellin' you that there is a *real* French Count payin' her a good deal of attention. And you know —

(Edith North, a pretty girl of eighteen enters from the house.)

Mrs. North (seeing her)

Well, we will talk the matter over in the house. Mrs. Delmar, this is my daughter Edith.

Mrs. Delmar (taking Edith's hand)

Ah, how much you resemble your mother. I am so pleased to meet you.

Mrs. North.

Edith, Mrs. Delmar is to be your French teacher.

Mrs. Delmar.

I am sure you will like the French very much—an apt pupil, too, I should say. (Edith shows displeasure)

Mrs. North.

Yes, she'll get on I'm sure. Walk right in, Mrs. Delmar. (turning to Edith) Edith, no more of this. I'm bound you will learn French. (exeunt Mrs. Delmar and Mrs. North in house)

Edith.

Oh, Mamma is so fickle, she changes her mind every week. First it is music, then flower painting, and before I know anything of either, I must devote myself wholly to French. And all because of that pokey old Count.

(Charles Dale, a neatly dressed young man of twenty-two enters C.)

Charles Dale.

Good morning, Edith!

Edith (slightly startled)

Oh! Charles!

Charles Dale.

I expect you heartily wish I would remain away for at least twenty-four hours; here last evening and here this morning; but I think I am excusable when I tell you that I am here now as a cheeky reporter hunting for a "scoop."

Edith.

How very fearful you are of troubling me. You know you are always welcome, Charles. But please tell me what you mean by a scoop? You see I am quite stupid.

Charles Dale.

A scoop? Well, a scoop is where one paper publishes a bit of news before any other paper hears of it. You see your father is to be escorted to the house, here, by some of his friends; he will no doubt be asked to say a few words to them. I want to get the first interview with him after his homecoming. I am sure you will help me out.

Edith.

Of course I will, and you will get a scoop. Won't that be jolly!

Charles Dale.

The train is just in and he will be here in a few minutes.

Edith.

We will go in and sit right in the side window.

Charles Dale.

Capital!

Edith. (leading)

A scoop. Ha. Ha. (exeunt in house)

(Colonel Henry Harrison Barnaby, a small man of about sixty five years, with a gray mustache and a military bearing, enters hurriedly C.)

Col. Barnaby. (excitedly)

Oh, it reminds me of the sixties! The whole town is following after John's carriage. Such a rabble! They'll drive him plumb crazy. He could endure it much easier if he had smelled powder as I have. (fumbles at door but in his excitement fails to get in.) Confound the door. Martha! Martha! (In the distance is heard a fife and drum playing "When Johnnie Comes Marching Home Again.") Martha! (pounds at the door) Martha! Martha! (Colonel runs to C and looks out right. Music grows louder and shouts are heard.) Enter Mrs. North and Edith from house.

Mrs. North.

What is the matter, brother Henry?

Col. Barnaby.

John is coming! Hear the drums! Hurrah! It makes me tingle all over. Reminds me of the sixties.

Enter R. U. E., fife and drum corps with the stars and stripes, followed by John North and citizens who carry flags and banners bearing political inscriptions. John North is a man of fifty, large, and given to being portly. His genial face is smooth shaven; his hair is slightly tinged with gray. He wears a plain business suit and soft slouch hat. Carries a small hand satchel. The drum corps continue playing. John North greets his wife and daughter affectionately, and shakes hands with the Colonel who hangs on to his hand persistently. The crowd bursts into cheers. Edith enters the house and joins Dale, who is seen through the open window. Fife and drum corps cease playing. Cries of "Speech, Speech," from the crowd. John North (mounting rustic bench)

John North (addressing crowd)

FELLOW CITIZENS: This is one of the happiest moments of my life. My heart is thrilled at this grand and glorious expression of good will from you, my neighbors and townspeople. As you all know, I have lived in your midst for twenty years. When I came here I had nothing in the world. I began on the lower round of the ladder, and let me say that my first stroke of good luck was, when I married the daughter of one of Washington's pioneers. (motions towards Mrs. North who shows embarrassment) (crowd cheers loudly) And now, my fellow citizens, as you have seen fit to honor me with the nomination for so responsible an office as Governor, I will, elected, endeavor to carry out the pledges of our platform to the best of my ability. I promise that my administration of State affairs will be conducted in a straightforward and businesslike manner and in the interests of the common people. have always been a friend of the workingman. I am proud to say that there has never been a word of complaint as to wages, among the three hundred men employed in my mills. (cheers from the crowd) I am not a politician, and I hope that my Creator is pleased that I am not. My record speaks for itself and is open to inspection. If I am elected Governor of this State (crowd cheers and cries "You will be. Hurrah for John North,") If elected Governor, I will try to do my duty without fear or tayor. I thank you, each and all. (John North descends from rustic Lench and the crowd give three cheers and marches away to quickstep played by fife and drum corps).

John North. (with show of affection)

Well, mother, I got there with both feet.

(Colonel who has been watching the disappearing crowd picks up John's valise and enters the house.)

Mrs. North.

Well, I'm real glad, John. Just to think of your being Governor.

John North.

Hold on, mother, till the votes are counted. I may get pounded all around the political arena. Come, sit down here (moves toward rustic bench and throws himself wearily upon it) and I'll tell you all about it.

Mrs. North.

Yes, John, but Unity has the lunch all ready. Oh, say, I almost forgot to tell you. What do you think has happened?

John North.

In this neighborhood?

Mrs. North.

Yes, in this very block.

John North.

A new baby?

Mrs. North.

No. No, it's something awful!

John North.

Well?

Mrs. North.

Emma Jones has went and married that Joe Cartwright.

John North.

Well, my guess wasn't so far off. She could have done worse.

Mrs. North

She better a committed suicide.

John North.

Why?

Mrs. North.

He's a divorced man.

(enter Charles Dale and Edith from house)

John North.

Oh, pshaw, mother! Riding your hobby!

Charles Dale.

Mr. North, allow me to congratulate you.

John North.

(Shaking Dale's hand) You should rather express your sympathy, my boy. I've been pulled here and hauled there and jammed around till I feel like a bunged up stage horse on a hot day.

Charles Dale.

I wish my chances for Governor were as good as yours.

John North.

Yes, but politics at best is a bundle of uncertainty wrapped up with dazzling surprises.

Charles Dale.

No man could have a cleaner record than yourself, Mr. North.

John North.

Well, most men vote their party ticket; not their sentiment. Charles Dale.

Is there anything you wish to say to the readers of the Herald?

John North.

Yes; you might tell them that I'm in the race to win. The people know me, and what sort of a chap I am. It rests with them to choose their hired man. If they choose the other fellow, I won't complain. In my canvass of the State I will hit straight out from the shoulder. If there is anything to be shown up, I'll show it. When I'm elected I'll be Governor. This power will not be delegated to any one else. I'll run the shooting match and be responsible for the affairs of state.

Charles Dale.

That is right, Mr. North. (takes notes)

John North. (noticing impatience of Mrs. North)

But my lunch is waiting and you'll have to excuse me. I never was so hungry in my life. Land alive but I feel old this day. Now, mother, we will have some tea.

Mrs. North.

Edith; now don't forget your French tutor. (exeunt Mr. and Mrs. North into house)

Charles Dale.

The home-coming of the Hon. John North will make a rattling good story. I'm more than sorry that the Herald is on the other side of the political fence. There is so much I would like to say in behalf of your father, but I know they would not let it go through. But I am sure this will stand. (reads from note book) The beautiful daughter of the nominee greeted him with a kiss as the crowd—

Edith.

Now, really and truly, Charles, you did not write that?

Charles Dale.

But really and truly I did, Edith.

Edith.

Now you just let me see.

Charles Dale.

(Holding book for Edith to see and reads) The beautiful daughter of the nominee —

Edith.

Please strike that out. I am not beautiful—quite otherwise; and the people will all laugh.

Charles Dale.

Laugh? Well, I guess not. Don't you suppose I am a judge of pretty girls?

Edith.

Now you are making fun of me!

Charles Dale.

Edith, believe me, I am not. To me you are the loveliest girl in all the world.

Edith.

I don't doubt but that you have said that to half the girls in our class. I am sure I have heard you say it to three or four of them.

Charles Dale.

Oh, well; only in fun.

Edith.

Yes; I knew you were only in fun.

Charles Dale.

Edith, won't you ever take me seriously?

Edith.

Then you want me to be so very serious and treat you so solemnly? (laughs)

Charles Dale.

No, not that, you little tease. You know what I mean. You know what little boy used to send you valentines and hang May baskets on your door. (Edith seems more serious) Well, that little boy is a man now and the sweet dream of his boy-hood has grown more beautiful to him day by day, until now he feels that his future happiness rests entirely with that playmate of his youth. Edith, for months I have been struggling to tell you what you must already know. It seems to me that I have loved you always. I have been tempted to tell you this a thousand times, but some way I have felt that if I did I might be made the most miserable fellow on earth. (Edith shows emotion) Maybe I should not have told you. Maybe—but—well, I have confessed it all. (waits for Edith's reply) Tell me Edith, is the dream all over? (Edith choking with emotion)

Edith.

No, Charles, not that. I really can not talk to you now.

Charles Dale.

Ah, Edith, have I hoped against hope? Has yours been but a friendly interest in an old school mate?

Edith.

(With feeling) Oh Charles, if you only knew all — everything!

Charles Dale.

There is only one thing I care to know, and that is that you love me. Edith tell me that you do.

Edith.

Yes, Charles, I do, but — (enter Count R. U. E.)

Charles Dale.

(Starting to embrace her) Edith.

Edith.

(Warningly) The Count!

Count.

Ah, Madamoiselle! A pleasant morning to you!

Edith.

(Bowing) Count De Valois, my friend, Mr. Dale.

Count.

(Shaking Dale's hand) It does me ze honair.

Charles Dale.

Pleased to know you, sir.

Count.

(With agitation) You veel pardong me eef I take ze seat. (sits on seat and strives to compose himself. Business.)

Edith.

Why Count De Valois, what has happened?

Charles Dale.

Heart disease! Shall I get a doctor?

Count.

(Regaining his breath) I have ze encountair a moment past wiz ze intoxicated fellow.

Edith.

Oh, then you are not ill?

Count.

No, no; we meet on ze street below, and he speak to me in ze insolent mannair. I try to pass him by. No, no; he veel not let me.

Charles Dale.

Well, that is interesting.

Count.

I look for ze police. No police. Gone I do not know.

Charles Dale.

No police? How natural!

Count.

I say to heem let me pass! He strike hees feest at me. I sieze heem by ze collair and push heem in ze guttair. Oh, so

drunk he ees, he cannot rise. Ze bad liqueur. What a time I have. I nevair before feel so chagrin. I yet shake in my limbs.

Edith.

Oh, how perfectly awful!

Charles Dale.

Evidently, Count, it was a hobo trying to "hold you up."

Count.

Oh, no, Monsieur; he do not hold me, nor do I hold heem. I merely push heem ovair.

Charles Dale.

Calm yourself, Count. I am going down past there, and if I run across him I will have him taken into custody.

Count.

Oh, Monsieur, I hope you may! I shall be such gratitude to you.

Charles Dale.

Good day, Count!

Count.

(Bowing low) I bid you good day. (Count resumes seat. Edith extends her hand to Dale, who holds it, looking her full in the face a moment. Exit Dale R. U. E. hurriedly.)

Edith.

Count De Valois, will you not come into the house? You will be more comfortable in an easy chair. Mamma will be delighted to see you.

Count.

It ees very pleasant in ze shade of ze tree. At present I prefair it to ze house. You veel pardong me if I ask ze name of ze young gentleman? I am so stupid.

Edith.

Mr. Dale — Mr. Charles Dale.

Count.

Ah, zat ees it. Tale — Monsieur Tale. I veel now remember. You have him known ze many year I presume?

Edith.

(Impatiently) Yes; we were school mates.

(enter Mrs. North from house.)

Count.

Ah, ze fast friend of ze school time. How grand it ees; ze friend of ze school day.

Mrs. North.

(Profuse in her greeting, bet showing embarrassment) Why, how do you do, Count? I didn't know that you had come.

Count.

Madam, it does me ze honair.

Mrs. North.

We are always so glad to see you, Count. Edith, child, didn't you ask the Count in?

Count.

Madamoiselle gave ze charming invitation, I assure you. I prefer ze cool shade. I so perspire in ze sunshine.

Mrs. North.

Edith dear, your French tutor wishes to speak to you. You'll just please excuse her a minute, Count? (exit Edith hurriedly)

Count.

Ah, you should be ze proud parent — so charming daughter. She ees ze poem — ze sunlight of ze home.

Mrs. North.

Yes, Count, her Pa and I both think so. You know, Count, she's a-going to do something now, that pleases me wonderful. She's got an idea of learning French, and I been encouraging her in it. Got her a French tutor this morning.

Count.

(Rapturously) Ah, it make me so please! Ze beautiful language!

Mrs. North.

Yes; I was sure it would tickle you. (Count looks puzzled)
Count.

I do not wonder ze young man admire Madamoiselle. Ah, what ees ze name? Tale — Monsieur Tale.

Mrs. North

Oh, yes, Charlie Dale! Edith and him went to school to-

gether. She's always treated him nice since they growed up. Sort of a pity for him; his folks was always poor and he's had to shift for himself.

Count.

Ah, so? So?

Mrs. North.

No, she don't care nothing in particular about him. She's fitting herself to fill a high position. She don't want for nothing so far as money goes. (sighing) Oh, I don't know what we would do if she should think of leaving us to go very far away.

(John North entering from house.)

John North.

Well, I feel decidedly better. How are you, Count De Valleywah? You look hearty.

Count.

(Fervently) Monsieur I offer my congratulation on ze nomination for ze distinguished position. It ees an honair. Indeed, I am so please I cannot say in ze English what I would in my native tongue. You vill vin I sink.

John North.

You are right, Count; I will swim or sink; one or the other.

Count.

Ah, you not comprehend. I say I sink you vin.

Mrs. North.

(With nervous embarassment) The Count says he thinks you will win. You don't understand him, John.

John North.

Yes—yes. Beg pardon, Count. I think I'll win. I'm going to give it a mighty big hustle. Lead 'em a merry dance.

Count.

Ah, so you dance? You veel lead ze grand—ah, vat you call—ze grand—ball.

Mrs. North.

Why, John, you know you ain't danced in twenty years.

John North.

No, Count, you just didn't catch my meaning. I mean I don't intend to let the grass grow under my feet.

Count.

(Blankly) Yes—zat ees— no—ze grass—I— John North.

I mean I'll do my best.

Count.

Ah, you vin! I know. Ze grand victor. Ze honair!
John North.

Yes, Count; a fellow is on air, that's right. But I'll try to hold myself down. (Count looks abashed and Mrs. North glares at North, who is restive under her gaze) Maybe I didn't just catch your meaning though, Count.

Count.

Ze honair, Monsieur! Ze honair!

John North.

Yes — yes — on air. Martha, I was right. (Count looks appealingly at Mrs. North)

Mrs. North.

Never mind, John. Count, say we go in and join the young folks? Edith must be waiting for us.

Count.

With pleasure, Madam. (exeunt Mrs. North and Count in the house.

John North.

Guess I made another break. I never could understand ze-ze-ze-ze it sounds like a gang saw going through a fir knot.

(Enter Colonel Barnaby from house.)

Col. Barnaby.

John, who is that woman?

John North.

What woman?

Col. Barnaby.

Why, that handsome woman in the house.

John North.

I didn't see any woman in the house.

Col. Barnaby.

Well, there is one in there and she is a stunner. By Jinks,

such a smile I never saw before. I could not keep my eyes off of her.

John North.

Young woman?

Col. Barnaby.

Yes. Golden hair and magnificent figure. A regular princess.

John North.

Lord! Henry you are as bad as a young man in love.

Col. Barnaby.

Well, there have been men older than I, fall in love. Do you know, John, why I never married?

John North.

Well, Henry it wouldn't take a man long to guess.

Col. Barnaby.

Well, sir, the plain truth is, I never fell in love. (John bursts into a roar of laughter) Is there anything so very funny about that?

John North.

Funny? How about that old maid school ma'am, and the little grass widow from Nebraska?

Col, Barnaby,

(Nettled) Mere flirtation — mere flirtation!

John North.

That is one of your failings, Henry. If you had not admired so many of them, you would have been married twenty years ago. They think you are too easily caught. Take my advice, Henry, and at your age pay less attention to the fair sex. The flowers of June are not entranced by the frosts of December.

Col. Barnaby.

(Testily) I suppose you mean to insinuate that I am a frost.

John North.

(Jokingly) No, but I am sure you are not a June rose bud. Col. Barnaby.

Ahem! I know my place. I am not a fool—a consumate jack ass as you would infer. I am capable of taking care of myself, Mr. North, perfectly capable sir.

John North.

Now, get huffy, as usual. You never could take a joke where there was a woman in it.

Col. Barnaby.

You act as thought nobody would have me. Well, sir, I will prove to you that you are mistaken. You have thrown it up to me for years, that no girl would marry me, but I'll say right here, that I will show you that with all the girls there are in this town, that it is not such a hard matter to get a wife as you think. I will show you.

John North.

(Laughing) All right, Henry, I'm from Missouri. Nothing would please me more, than to see you act the part of sweet sixteen.

Col. Barnaby.

(Going up) Oh, I am used to your sarcasm. But it don't set well at all times.

John North.

(Calling after the Colonel) Henry! Don't go off mad— (exit Colonel R. U. E. John going up) Henry—Henry. (laughs) He has gone mad as a hornet. Poor old maid. (stands as if watching him.)

(Enter Mrs. Delmar from house)

Mrs. Delmar.

(At door) Very well, I will be here tomorrow morning at ten. Good day. (Mrs. Delmar, turning, meets John North coming down. North starts, on seeing her.) Oh, then, I have not changed so very much?

John North.

Helen! You - you here?

Mrs. Delmar.

Ah, I see you have not forgotten me.

John North.

Forgotten you? I have good reason for remembering you, Madam.

Mrs. Delmar.

Yes?

John North.

I have, indeed.

Mrs. Delmar.

I fancy you thought me dead and buried in some out of the way nook. But you see I am very much alive.

John North.

Only the good, die young. You show very plainly what you are, with your miserable bleached hair and bedaubed face. What are you doing around here?

Mrs. Delmar.

(Loftily) Oh, I expected my presence here would disturb you somewhat.

John North.

Where did you escape from?

Mrs. Delmar.

Oh, I'm a bird of passage!

John North.

More likely a bird of prey.

Mrs. Delmar.

I just dropped in. You have a lovely home. (tauntingly)

John North.

Well, you can just drop out again.

Mrs. Delmar.

Things are awfully nice. So different from what we used to have.

John North.

Madam, I do not care to talk to you.

Mrs. Delmar.

I suppose not, now. But later on it may be that you will want to talk to me.

John North.

(Studying her closely) Your presence here is not desired.

Mrs. Delmar.

(Laughs sneeringly) No?

John North.

You are a dizzy looking thing — I hate you worse than ever.

Mrs. Delmar.

(Sneeringly) Then you are not glad a little bit to see me?

John North.

Understand me; don't you never set foot on these grounds again.

Mrs. Delmar.

Oh, but I'm going to bring Johnnie to see you, next time!

John North.

Johnnie? Who's Johnnie? The fellow you eloped with?

Mrs. Delmar.

By no means, Mr. North. Have you forgotten your son—your namesake? Your memory must be failing.

John North.

(With nervous anger) I was told the baby died owing to your carelessness and neglect, and I had it from good authority, too. I should have taken him as the court allowed, but, by the time I located you and your paramour, I was informed that the child had died.

Mrs. Delmar.

Perhaps, had he been with you, the living evidence of a previous marriage, might have interfered with your second matrimonial venture.

John North.

You snake! What do you mean to insinuate?

Mrs. Delmar.

I mean that your present wife does not dream that there ever was a first Mrs. North.

John North.

Eh? What, and you told her?

Mrs. Delmar.

Oh, you are getting excited, Mr. North, and you really do want to talk to me now?

John North.

(Excitedly) My God, you did not tell her?

Mrs. Delmar.

Not yet — no! Considering her mania on the subject of second marriage, I really did not want a suicide in my presence.

John North.

You have been talking with her?

Mrs. Delmar.

Yes, we have had a delightful chat.

John North.

Oh, you viper! Poluting my household with your presence!

Mrs. Delmar.

Oh, your robes are not so spotless! You have played the hypocrite, well.

John North.

Hypocrite? — Madam — I —

Mrs. Delmar.

Oh, not so savagely, Mr. North. Modulate your tone. You are talking too loud for your own good. Your deceit might be discovered even at this late day.

John North.

(Wincing) Well, go. You — you exasperate me. By what pretence, Madam, did you gain entrance to my home?

Mrs. Delmar.

As tutor in French, to your very pretty daughter, Mr. North. I am excellent at teaching people lessons. (laughs tauntingly)

John North.

Well, you will not teach her French, nor anything else. I forbid you speaking to her. The idea of you, under the same roof with my wife and daughter!

Mrs. Delmar.

(Calmly and sarcastically) It is funny, isn't it?

John North.

(In a rage) Funny? Funny? It—it is damnable!

Mrs. Delmar.

Yes, you see now, how wrong it was to deceive her. But the dear, ignorant soul, has engaged me nevertheless.

John North.

Then consider that I have disengaged you, Madam — understand?

Mrs. Delmar.

Now, you are talking too loud, again. Do not work yourself into a frenzy. The position suits me to a T.

John North.

Damn it, woman; don't you know that I will not permit you to mingle with my family?

Mrs. Delmar.

Oh, come now, John —

John North.

Don't you John me, Madam?

Mrs. Delmar.

The terms are all arranged. You will permit me to mingle with your family, and will pay me well for doing so.

John North:

Not a cent. Not a red cent!

Mrs. Delmar.

Oh, yes, you will; and what is more, you will give me all the money I need. Just think, election is coming on.

John North.

I see through your accursed, diabolical game, but you can't blackmail me you — you —

Mrs. Delmar.

Really, John —

John North.

Bah! don't you never call me that again. I will not have such familiarity. You can't break up my home in any such way. Go, and never darken my doors again!

Mrs. Delmar.

(Laughing) Not until tomorrow at ten. Don't worry, I will return, and possibly Johnnie will call and see you, too. He wants to look at his Honorable Papa. Do not forget that you are running for Governor. Good bye J-o-h-n till tomorrow at ten. Ta, ta. (exit Mrs. Delmar laughing R. U. E.) (enter Colonel Barnaby, R. U. E. hurriedly, almost colliding with Mrs. Delmar.)

Col. Barnaby.

(Very profuse) · Your pardon, Madam — your pardon!

Mrs. Delmar.

(With great affectation and smiling) Granted. (exit Mrs. Delmar R. U. E. Colonel watches her with open mouthed admiration.)

John North.

(Ascending steps to house) The devil!

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

Scene 1. Back parlor. Doors C. L. and R. At rise, Mrs. North discovered sitting at right of table reading a novel. Edith is thrumming the keys of the piano. Mrs. North throwing book on table.

Mrs. North.

Fool book! Insane idea! No girl could be so in love with a divorced man. I'll not read another word of it.

Edith.

What did you say, mamma?

Mrs. North.

Nothing, dear. Ain't you forgot the time for your French lesson?

Edith.

Oh, no, Mamma, I have it in mind every moment; anything so perfectly delightful, would be impossible to forget, you know.

Mrs. North.

Well, goodness me, she must be waiting for you.

Edith.

To tell you the truth, Mamma, Uncle Henry is so busily engaged in telling her of his bravery and the sixties, that I really do not think she will have time for my French lesson. And I am not in a bit of a hurry, myself.

Mrs. North.

I am so sorry, Edith, that you take absolutely no interest in a thing that I want you to do.

Edith.

Why, Mamma, you never thought of my studying French until—until—well, not until lately. I was very much interested in flower painting.

Mrs. North.

Well, a little bit of daubing in paint ain't a-going to benefit vou none, is it?

Edith.

No more than a little smattering of French.

Mrs. North.

That's it; you don't appreciate one thing I do for you, nor any ambition I might have to see you in a high position. My goodness, if I'd a had your chance when I was a girl, you'd a seen me lit in. But I was the one of the whole family to have to do without schooling. Raised in the woods! Here you are the only child and your parents anxious to do for you.

Edith.

Why not German or Italian, Mamma?

Mrs. North.

German your foot! You don't suppose do you, that there would be German Dukes and Italian Lords a-runnin' around here to see you every day, do you? Well, it's plain to be seen that you don't appreciate nothing. Land alive, I wish you would get some high ideas in your head. The Count is delighted.

Edith.

Oh, the Count! Spare me from titles. Give me an out and out American, every time.

Mrs. North.

Yes, there you go. A cook or a Count is all the same to you. I suppose you would take up with an ordinary scribbler on a newspaper.

Edith:

(With feeling) Mamma, I know to whom you refer. I will tell you plainly, that this ordinary scribbler as you call him, is more to me, than all the titled adventurers of Europe.

Mrs. North.

(Showing disgust) Nonsense. Don't let me hear no more such talk, or the first time that young upstart comes grinning around here I'll give him his walking papers. I'm bound, Edith, you'll not drive your ducks to no such market.

(enter John North, C. with newspaper in hand)

John North.

It is simply infamous! I never said such a word!

Edith.

Why, what is it, Papa?

John North.

What is it? Well, just listen to this batch of falsehoods.

(reads) The few who escorted the Hon. John North to his home, were evidently disappointed at the remarks of their candidate. His bid for the workingman's vote fell with a dull thud, and his repeated references to himself savored more of egotism than oratory. He seemed to confound the duties of Governor with the saw mill business, and assured his hearers that if he was elected Governor, he intended to ignore public opinion completely, and would regulate all State matter's according to his own divine intelligence. (to Mrs. North and Edith) Just think of such a point blank lie! Why, the fellow has not a spark of truth in him!

Edith.

What paper said that about you?

John North.

The Herald!

Edith.

Oh, Papa, I am sure that is not Charles' write up. He would never say anything like that about you. He never wrote it.

John North.

Wrote it? Why, of course he wrote it. Wasn't he here yesterday? The young scamp!

Mrs. North.

Just his calibre! There's your scribbler, for you! Some folks is always getting took in by just such people. I am not surprised in the least.

Edith.

But, Mamma, I know Charles never wrote those words. Money could not have hired him to misquote Papa. I know him too well.

Mrs. North

Well, it's most astonishing to hear you talk! Ketch me a holdin' anybody up, that would run my Pa down like that. Why, I'd a been ready to a-wrung his neck.

Edith.

Mamma, I do not care what you say, I know there has been some mistake. Charles never wrote that.

Mrs. North.

Well, that ends him a-comin' here! (enter Unity Jane with card, which she hands to John North)

Edith.

(Pleadingly) Oh, Mamma!

Mrs. North.

Well, you will see if he dares to show his head here again. He's cooked his goose.

John North.

(to Unity) Show him in. (exit Unity C.) Not so loud, Mother! He has just come. We will see what he has to say.

Mrs. North.

I don't want to hear nothin' he has to say. All is, he has fixed himself with me.

(Enter Dale, C.)

Charles Dale.

(Fumbling with his hat nervously) Good morning — ah, — good morning, all! (Mrs. North eyes him coldly. Edith smiles a greeting, but acts under restraint)

John North.

Well, young man, your call is most opportune. Sit down.

Charles Dale.

I called, Mr. North, to offer an explanation of the story of yourself, in this morning's Herald.

John North.

I'll be glad to hear what you have to say.

Mrs. North.

I abominate this explainin' business! When a thing is said or done, it is said and done and that's all there is to it.

Charles Dale.

I do not blame you for being angry, Mrs. North. I was thunderstruck when I read it, myself. It was not what I wrote. It was garbled for political effect. Believe me, Mr. North, it was not my doing.

Edith.

There, now, I knew Charles never wrote it. I knew it all the time.

John North.

Well, I couldn't hardly believe it of you, Charley, myself.

Charles Dale.

It has placed me in such a bad light, that I feel that I must resign my position.

John North.

Oh, no, don't do that. You must consider the attitude of the editor to my candidacy. Politics is politics.

Charles Dale.

Well, Mr. North, I am indeed glad that you do not feel hard toward me.

John North.

Don't mention it! Don't mention it! Your explanation has cleared the atmosphere.

Mrs. North.

Well, as I live and breathe! If you don't beat all! The idea of your being softsoaped like that!

Edith.

Why, Mamma!

Mrs. North

Edith, hush! It ain't your put in. Your Pa has been treated scandalous, and I for one, don't mean to be mealy mouthed about it.

John North.

Well, Mother, we will take the young man's word for it. Don't weigh your heart down with a grudge. (to Dale) Women don't understand this political business. So don't take anything to heart.

Mrs. North.

Well, there is no need to talk about it any more. When I'm done, I'm done.

Charles Dale.

I trust you will feel differently about it, some day, Mrs. North, I am sorry that you doubt me. I bid you good day. (Mrs. North remains frigid)

John North.

It is all right, my boy. (shakes Dale's hand and turns and engages in mock conversation with Mrs. North)

Charles Dale.

(To Edith) You believe me, don't you, Edith?

Edith.

Yes, Charles, I believe you—every word, I shall never doubt you—never.

Charles Dale.

I thank you, Edith. I understand you now. I see your position. I see it all. (taking her hand) Good bye. (exit Dale C. hurriedly).

Mrs. North.

Well, I don't want him a-coming here any more a-making eyes at Edith. (to Edith) Now Edith, go and see if your tutor is ready to begin your French. (exit Edith R. sullenly).

John North.

But don't be unreasonable, mother. He is a bright young man.

Mrs. North

What is he alongside of a Count?

John North.

That is for Edith to choose.

Mrs. North.

I think we got a little to say in the matter.

(enter Colonel Barnaby and Mrs. Delmar, R. Mrs. D. carrying bouquet and leaning on Colonel's arm).

Col. Barnaby.

(to Mrs. Delmar) The bullets whistled round me and the cannon roared. Lee's troops rushed up on the right. We made a flank movement. I siezed the flag and yelled, "On!"

Mrs. Delmar.

How brave of you. Oh, I do admire a brave soldier.

Col. Barnaby.

Had you been there to have cheered me on, I could have whipped the enemy single handed and with no weapon but the sword.

Mrs. Delmar.

Now, Colonel, you flatter me, do you really think me so inspiring?

Col. Barnaby.

Ah, what man could resist your charms? Inspire? Why, what man would not gladly lay down his life for you?

Mrs. Delmar.

(coquettishly) Now, Colonel Barnaby! Really, you embarass me.

Col. Barnaby.

(admiringly) Ah, those eyes and that golden hair. You simply intoxicate—

Mrs. North.

(seeing the Colonel and Mrs. D.) Oh, you are here! I just sent Edith in. Oh, excuse me! You haven't met my husband, have you? Mr. North this is Mrs. Delmar, Edith's French tutor. (John North pays no heed to Mrs. North) Mr. North, this is — this is — Mr. North — (John half turning) Mrs. Delmar!

John North.

(with great dignity) Madam!

Mrs. Delmar.

I am so pleased to meet you, Mr. North.

Mrs. North.

This is the lady, John, that is going to learn Edith, French.

John North.

Yes, so you said.

Col. Barnaby.

Martha, do you know it would be a capital idea if we could induce Mrs. Delmar to come right here to the house and stay where she and Edith could hold conversations entirely in French, Edith's progress would be remarkably rapid.

Mrs. North.

Well, Henry, I hadn't thought of that, but since you mention it, I don't know but what it would be a good idea. She could have that side room off the — What do you think about it, Pa?

John North.

(who has been struggling to maintain his composure) I have quit thinking.

Mrs. Delmar.

Of course, unless it is perfectly agreeable to Mr. North, and he sees the advantage, why——

John North.

(smothering his anger) I see the advantage.

Col. Barnaby.

Of course — of course he couldn't help but see the advantage.

Mrs. North.

Well, we will go right in and talk it over with Edith.

Mrs. Delmar.

(smiling) Excuse me, Colonel.

Col. Barnaby.

(bowing and smiling foolishly) Certainly. (exeunt Mrs. North and Mrs. Delmar, who smiles back at the Colonel from doorway). (to John) Did you ever see such eyes? She is a charmer—a veritable fairy—the embodiment of wit and beauty—graceful as a willow with the form of a Venus.

John North.

There! That is enough of such twaddle, Henry. You are the proverbial moth hovering around the flame, and mark me you will get your wings devilishly singed. I should think you would have done at your age with such nonsense.

Col. Barnaby.

Not so long as my heart beats will I cease to admire a beautiful woman. (peers out R. D.)

John North.

Beautiful! Hell!!

Col. Barnaby.

Ah, if I could only get another glimpse of her—she just intoxicates me. John, did you ever see such hair?

John North.

Yes, in the circus.

Col. Barnaby.

(in surprise) What?

John North.

Henry, don't tell me that you are infatuated with that—that woman, in so short a time. For heaven's sake go a little slow.

Col. Barnaby.

Then you would dictate my course of conduct?

John North.

I'll not sit by and see you duped.

Col. Barnaby.

Eh?

John North.

Yes, duped! Don't be a fool, Henry!

Col. Barnaby.

You are taking a good deal on yourself, Mr. North. I will do as I please. The next thing you will be telling me to come in out of the rain. Such presumption! Fool, eh? What is it to you if I see fit to admire a vivacious woman?

John North.

It is a good deal to me, Henry, and I must ask that you cease your attentions to this particular woman, especially in my house.

Col. Barnaby.

I see! I have aroused your jealousy.

John North.

By no means, Henry, I merely intend to constitute myself your guardian.

Col. Barnaby.

John North you are going too — too far. I am not quick to take offence but I feel that your palpable enviousness has caused you to grossly insult me. A little more and I shall leave your house.

John North.

Well, suit yourself, Henry, if you will not listen to reason. You are too old a bird to be caught with chaff. (exit North L.)

(Enter Mrs. North, R.)

Mrs. North.

Well, brother Henry, it's all settled and she's to have the corner room and — why, are you sick? What makes you so of a tremble?

Col. Barnaby.

Your amiable husband has seen fit to interfere with my affair.

Mrs. North.

What affairs?

Col. Barnaby.

I think it has come to a pretty pass when John North exacts anything of me so preposterous.

Mrs. North.

Well, land alive, what is it?

Col. Barnaby.

He insulted me because I was courteous to Mrs. Delmar. And I resented it.

Mrs. North.

Well! Oh, Henry, you know what a hector he is.

Col. Barnaby.

Hector, nothing! He was in dead earnest. Confound it I am tempted to think that he is jealous of me.

Mrs. North.

There, now, Henry, I believe you are in love again. John—jealous!

Col. Barnaby.

Yes, Martha, jealous! He glared at me like a tiger — called me names — said I could leave the house — would not permit any attention to Mrs. Delmar under his roof. I'm going to pack my trunk, Martha, and leave this house. (starts toward C. Mrs. North following and taking him by the arm).

Mrs. North

No you won't! Now, Henry, we will go and find John, and you will see it's just one of his jokes. (exeunt Mrs. N. and the Colonel, C)

(enter John, L. Walks about, showing extreme nervousness. Enter Unity Jane, L.)

Unity.

There is somebody at the door that wants to see you, Mr. North. He never give me no card.

John North.

Tell him I'm not in.

Unity.

Yes, but you are.

John North.

Only in the flesh, not in the spirit. Not in. Understand?
Unity.

(blankly) What'll I say?

John North.

Say? Say? Why, say that I'm not in. What are you standing there for?

Unity.

He — he — he said that Miss Edith's teacher woman — was—
(North's face shows sudden comprehension)

John North.

Well, show him in. (as Unity is about to exit, L. she runs into Johnny who is entering, and screams. Exit Unity, L.)

Johnny is a typical street tough. His two front teeth are missing and one eye is blacked. North scrutinizes Johnny from head to foot.

John North.

(in subdued tone) What is your name, young man?

Johnny.

My Mudda calls me Johnny. Mostly I come widout callin'.

John North.

You're a nice looking specimen of the genus homo. How did you get your eye knocked out? eh?

Johnny.

De bloke of a Frenchman blimmed me in de gutter. When I gits me mud hooks on him, I won't do a t'ing to him, see?

John North.

Some low down saloon row I suppose. What do you do for a living, anyway?

Johnny.

Oh — graft!

John North.

Graft? Graft? Trees?

Johnny.

Nit! Just fake along.

John North.

Fake along! I guess I am not familiar with your dictionary. What is faking along, eh?

Johnny.

Oh, slingin' beer in de variety and ridin' in de races.

John North.

Slinging beer and riding the races! A nice occupation! I take you to be a sweet scented individual of the hobo element.

You will dangle at the end of a rope some time. Don't you know you will, you young imp of Satan? (Johnny starts to roll a cigarette)

John North.

Here! None of your infernal cigarettes around my house. What business have you coming here, anyhow?

Johnny.

Mudda said you wanted to see me. Thought mebbe the Guv. would git stuck on his son's shape.

John North.

(in desperation) Son? Son? Don't you son me, or you'll attend a funeral. Now you get and don't you show your face here again.

Johnny.

Guy. I'm deak broke till mudda gits her pay for de French lessons.

John North.

Here you — you — here take this (giving Johnny silver) out with you, quick!

Johnny.

(shaking money) I won't do a t'ing to dese shiners. I'll gin up an' hunt for dat French guy. You're a warm baby, Guy.! You're an all right cuckoo.

John North.

Bah! (exit Johnny, L. enter Mrs. Delmar, R.) A nice kettle of fish!

Mrs. Delmar.

Why, I thought I heard Johnny's voice.

John North.

So you did, Madam, so you did! But you don't hear it now.

Mrs. Delmar.

Why, have you sent him away? The dear, darling, I have not seen him today.

John North.

Of course I sent him away! What else would I do?

Mrs. Delmar.

Invite him to remain.

John North.

Disgrace my home with that missing link? Never! I'll wear out the sidewalk with him if he dares to come here again.

Mrs. Delmar.

Why, John, how savage you are growing. If Johnny is a trifle wild —

John North.

A trifle wild — a trifle?

Mrs. Delmar.

I am not wholly responsible. Now that he is near you it would only be right for you to advise him and guide his footsteps in the straight and narrow path. (laughs)

John North.

Guide the devil! I would sooner guide a Modoc Indian. He is absolutely worthless — thoroughly deprayed.

Mrs. Delmar.

Then it is your Christian duty to uplift the fallen. (laughs) You are doing nobly by your daughter. For her you can even afford French lessons.

John North.

Beast! How dare you speak of my daughtor in the same breath with that blear-eyed, red-nosed scalawag? You are getting me desperate. What are you lingering here for, anyway? (in high pitched tone) Why don't you go on with your French?

Mrs. Delmar.

Calm yourself, John, calm yourself, dear. Do you think it wise to mar the happiness of this household? I for one am perfectly contented. Fine corner room, servants in waiting, money to burn and Colonel Barnaby, all in twenty-four hours.

John North.

Madam, you are trying to raise the devil with me, but you can go only so far. You need not set your snare for my brother-in-law. (enter Unity Jane) I'll not see you—(sees Unity and takes card) I'll not—(reads name aloud) James Maxwell? James Maxwell?

Mrs. Delmar.

(with sudden alarm, to Unity) Not in —

John North.

Show him—

Mrs. Delmar.

(intensely) Mr. North is not in, go!

John North.

(dumbfounded) Woman, I-

Mrs. Delmar.

(starting toward Unity threateningly) Not in—not in I say! (Unity shrinks out C.)

John North.

Well, we will see. (starts, calls Unity) Here, girl!

Mrs. Delmar.

(confronting North) No! This means as much to you as it does to me. James Maxwell—detective!

John North.

(aghast) Huh! Detective! Then you have laid me in a lie to an officer. (enter Colonel and Mrs. North, C.) Woman, you have ruined me. I shall confess it all. You—you— (in a rage)

Mrs. Delmar.

(seeing the Colonel and Mrs. North. Mrs. Delmar rushing to the Colonel's arms) Oh, Colonel, shield me. He's insane.

Mrs. North.

(hysterically) Oh, John — Insane!

John North.

(siezing a vase and dashing it on the floor) Insane! Yes. God a' mighty, insane!

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

Scene 1. Library doors R. and L. Desk and revolving book case L. Fireplace with mantel, R. General library furniture. At rise of curtain Mrs. North is standing by the revolving book case deeply absorbed in the contents of an Encyclopedia.

Mrs. North.

(with disgust) Well, I do declare! A whole lot of big words and not a blessed thing to show what they mean. (enter Colonel Barnaby, L.) (Mrs. North hearing the Colonel enter the room and without turning to see who it is, in a flustrated manner attempts to replace the book in the case. The case revolves, and in her hurry fails to find the space previously occupied by the book.)

Col. Barnaby.

Well, Martha, you seem —

Mrs. North.

(turning to him with book in hand) O, brother Henry! It is you! I thought it was John. It's about time for him. The boat is due at five. (Colonel looking at watch.)

Col. Barnaby.

A quarter after now. What book is that you have?

Mrs. North

(abashed) Oh, it's the Brittaniky. You know I was just a looking to see what I could find in the way of symptoms.

Col. Barnaby.

What symptoms?

Mrs. North.

Why, brain disorders.

Col. Barnaby.

So you are still trying to make yourself believe that John is mentally deranged.

Mrs. North.

Yes, Henry, I am sure he is out of his head. Just look at the way he smashed that vase. No, Henry, John ain't himself.

Col. Barnaby.

That is clearly evident. His head is no doubt turned, and in my opinion, his heart is most seriously affected.

Mrs. North.

Yes, Henry, you can't tell what politics is liable to do. He's all wrought up. His eyes looks perfectly wild. And that's one of the first symptoms. (replaces book in case). I never slept a wink last night for worrying over him. I just wonder if he done anything strange at the meeting last night. (chokingly) Seems like my heart will break.

Col. Barnaby.

Well, only for you, Martha, I should not have stayed under his roof another night. Helen hasn't really recovered from the shock of yesterday's occurrence.

Mrs. North.

Oh, Henry, I'm just upset over the way he done! And I'm all of a tremble when I think of the dinner tonight. What if he'd act up before the Count.

Col. Barnaby.

Don't think, my dear sister, that John is not in full possession of his right senses. You will observe that wild look in his eye, and his fits of anger have all occurred within the past two days. I hesitate to say this, but I fear it is that green eyed monster — jealousy.

Mrs. North.

Oh, brother Henry, the idea of him a being jealous of you. It's redic'lous. You know well enough that he never looked at no other woman but me. (half crying) I know he is wrong in his head. There is certainly something ailing him.

Col. Barnaby.

Well, Martha, I only hope that you are right.

Mrs. North.

(wiping her eyes) Why, Henry Barnaby, ain't you aslıamed of yourself?

Col. Barnaby.

Why - what?

Mrs. North.

You're a saying that you hoped that John was going crazy.

Col. Barnaby.

Well—ah—that is—I meant that I hoped that ah—

(enter John North, L.)

John North.

(wiping the perspiration from his brow) Well, here I am! Whew, but it is a scorcher in the sun! (kisses Mrs. North who appears half afraid of him) How are you anyway, Mother? I am awful sorry you did not go with me yesterday. Had a fine time—big crowd—house packed to the doors. (exit Colonel, R. unobserved) People seem to be alive to the issue of the day. Ah, where did Henry go?

Mrs. North.

I — I guess he has went to get ready for dinner.

John North.

Get ready?

Mrs. North.

Why, yes, you know the Count —

John North.

Oh, yes, he is to dine with us tonight.

Mrs. North

Then you didn't forget it. I was kind afraid — (hesitatingly) you might of forgot it. You got so many things on your mind. Did you sleep good last night, John?

John North.

Bless my soul, I never slept a wink. Woke up this morning with a roaring headache.

Mrs. North.

(apart) Them's the symptoms! (to North) Your head has been aching you a good deal of late, ain't it?

John North.

Yes, mother, I'm so tired out I'm hardly myself. My head is just in a whirl.

Mrs. North.

(nervously) Well, is it that things ain't just clear to you? You know John, I'm worried for fear — for fear — you might be getting-the-brain fever.

John North.

Ha! Ha! Brain nothing—just a little nervous. Well, come on, mother, out on the veranda, the cool air will feel better on my head. (exit North, R. Mrs. North following.)

Mrs. North.

(apart) His head! Oh, that's it! That's it! (exit Mrs. North, R. visibly affected.)

(Enter Count and Edith.)

Count.

Madamoiselle. it ees ze beautiful language — so full of ze music. I do not comprehend why you like not ze French. It ees ze most charming of all ze language.

\ Edith.

It is possible that I am prejudiced. Then, too, my tutor may be at fault in not interesting me more in the study of French.

Count.

Ah, zat ees it! You should have the excellent tutor. I could so quick teach you ze French. If only you knew my native tongue how sweet ze words would sound from your lips. Is it that you would not like to visit France and see Paris, ze most beautiful city in all ze world? La belle Paris! Is it that you would not like to see ze beautiful city, madamoiselle?

Edith.

Oh — yes. I expect it is much finer than Seattle. (laughs) Count.

(laughing) You jest, Madamoiselle. You cannot comprehend her magnificence. She is so grand beyond what words can tell. I would so wish you to see her. Ze grand building! Ze theatre! Ah, ze home of ze artist! You would be so happy in Paris—so charm by her loveliness. Ah, how I love her. And you too would love her. You love ze beautiful?

Edith.

Indeed I do. I love the beauty of nature—the evergreen hills of Washington—the glorious mountains reaching up into the blue, blue sky whiter than any chiseled marble in the world. Ours is the architecture of God, yours that of man. I love Washington better, much better than I could ever love Paris, Count De Valois.

Count.

Ah, not so — not so! You would love my Paris — the gay, laughing Paris I so well know. You will love her. Madamoiselle listen to me — to what I would say to you. Ze words what I would speak have for days been on my lips. They

have burn in my heart. I could not before speak them. When I look your beautiful eyes into I could not say what I would have you to know. We are now alone. Listen Madamoiselle! I love you—love you—so. I would make you mine—all mine. I would take you to Paris a Countess. Ah, do you hear me—what I say—a Countess. Do you not know what it means?

Edith.

Count De Valois, I appreciate your friendship, but to become your wife, I cannot. It is impossible. I could only marry one whom I love.

Count.

Ah, my beautiful queen! My flower of ze west! Ah, my love! I adore — I worship — Madamoiselle, my heart beats for you — for you alone. Be mine I implore! I will go mad for you with ze love. (kisses her hand.)

Edith.

(withdrawing hand) I hope you will not be offended with me, but I can never, never marry you. I would not alone be doing myself a wrong, but you as well. We will be friends, Count De Valois — friends.

Count.

Ah, Madamoiselle do not say those cruel words. You must be mine! I die for you! You love me! Ah, speak one word! Say you will learn. I cannot from you part! The Count De Valois kneels at your feet. (kneels) He prays for your love. Ah, you do love him, I see it in those glorious eyes (siezes her hand) Ah, Madamoiselle, you will drive me mad. I will—

Edith.

You are hurting my hand.

Count.

You must love me.

Edith.

You are hurting my hand, I say. You are —

Count.

Mine! Mine.

Edith.

My hand! You will please let go! Some one is coming. (Edith wrenches her hand from the Count's grasp.)

(Enter John North, R. the Count is still on his knees but rises immediately on North's entrance and appears greatly confused.)

John North.

(after a hearty laugh) Devotional exercises, I should judge.

Count.

(greatly embarrassed) Ah — excuse, Monsieur. I sink I go on ze veranda. (mopping face with handkerchief) Ze room is very warm. (exit Count, R.)

Edith.

Oh, I am so glad Papa, that you came in! He annoys me almost to death.

John North.

(going to desk on which is a package of letters) Fire him! Fire him! He's a perfect bore. I would rather listen to a buzz saw. (running the letters over) You stay here and keep me company and let him annoy your Ma. My, how letters will pile up! (seating himself at the desk) Suppose I might as well look some of these over now as any time.

Edith.

Oh, Papa, let me help you and you will get through much sooner! Play I was your private secretary. (seating herself beside North on footstool) I am excellent at reading letters.

John North.

Well, daughter, I am afraid these political letters would not interest you in the least. But here is one. Now what will you give for it?

Edith.

Is it for me?

John North.

For you.

Edith.

Oh, I will give you a great big kiss. (kisses North) There! (takes letter and opens it with eagerness.)

John North.

(opening letter) Somebody wants a job, I'll bet a dollar. (reading letter aloud) "If you could see your way clear to appoint me warden of the penitentiary"—No I can't see my way clear. (opens another one) Here it is again. (reads) "In case of your election, please consider me an applicant for the wardenship of the penitentiary." They must all want to go to jail. I know that fellow. Some men get there that are not made wardens.

Edith.

(intently reading) Oh, how good of him!

John North.

(reading from letter) "As you will be elected Governor without a doubt, I therefore take time by the forelock and make application for warden" Another man wants to go to the pen! His previous experience ought to be enough. (reading from another letter) "I will work hard for your election. You are a noble man. I am not asking for anything but if you could appoint me warden"—Well, wonldn't that kill you? I won't look at another one of them. (to Edith, who is completely absorbed in her letter) You seem to think more of your one letter than I do of all of mine. Does he want to be warden of the penitentiary, too?

Edith.

No, Papa. It is only a few lines from Charles. You know he does not feel at liberty to come to the house since — since—

John North.

Since when?

Edith.

Since Mamma became so angry at him yesterday for that article in the Herald. He feels dreadfully over that. Indeed he does, Papa!

John North.

Well, I forgave it all. So far as I am concerned the boy is perfectly welcome in my house — perfectly welcome.

Edith.

Oh, papa, I'm so glad that you feel as you do about him.

John North.

You seem very much interested in young Dale, my dear.

Edith.

(shyly) Why—I—

John North.

Ah, I suspect there is a little affair of hearts here. (Edith drops her eyes) Ha! Ha! Your father is good at guessing.

Edith.

Papa, you are a great big tease Charles and I are old friends.

John North.

Yes—friends. That's what they all say. (seriously) Well, it is not for me to say whom you shall love, my child—it is not for me to say. (Edith bursts into tears) What, my little girl in tears. Why, daughter, what is the trouble—what is the trouble? Come, now, tell me all about it. There! There! Don't cry—don't cry.

Edith.

(sobbing) I am very, very unhappy, Papa.

John North.

Unhappy? Why, how so, Edith? Tell me. You always used to tell me your troubles when you were a little tot—always came running to me for sympathy when you fell into the rose bushes and scratched yourself, and now you should not hesitate when you are older and have fallen in love. There are thorns in either case you know.

Edith.

It is not that, Papa. It is because I feel that — that —

John North.

Out with it! I am listening.

Edith.

That I am making mamma very miserable. I know I am. (weeps afresh)

John North.

There! There! Don't take it so to heart. What reason have you for thinking so?

Edith.

Well, Papa, as you certainly know, Mamma is very anxious that I should — well, that I should accept the attentions of Count De Valois. I do not like the Count and I told Mamma so the other day. While she did not say much to me I could see she was awfully disappointed. She has not seemed herself since then. She has hardly — hardly — spoken to me today.

John North.

Well, don't worry over it. It will come out right.

Edith.

This morning I noticed that her eyes were red as though she had been crying. I am so—so sorry to displease Mamma and make her so unhappy. I would rather die.

John North.

(uneasily) Perhaps it is something else your mother is worrying over. Don't you think you are jumping at conclusions?

Edith.

No, it is nothing else I am sure. Why, what could it be?

John North.

Well — ah — no telling.

Edith.

Oh, I am the cause of it all. I know it, papa. I do so hate to cause her even one moment's sorrow. But do you think it would be right for a girl to marry a man she did not and could not love?

John North.

No sir-e-e. No empty titles will be bought around this ranch. Your dad's an American.

Edith.

I do not think it would be right to do so even though it were to please someone else. Perhaps — I — might — though.

John North.

Well, perhaps you won't. You will do your own choosing. There, kiss me. I will talk with your mother.

Edith.

(kissing North) You were always so kind to me, you dear, dear papa.

John North.

There, your mother is calling you.

Edith.

Yes, the Count! I must go: (exit Edith, R.)

(North rises and looks after her. Then paces about the room showing extreme worry. As if siezed with a sudden impulse resumes his seat at the desk. Taking pen and paper.)

John North.

I'll do it! I'll write Tom Travers and tell him the situation. He knew Helen, and perhaps he can propose a scheme to help me out of this mess. (writes) Dear Friend Tom. Doubtless you have read of my nomination. Now to be brief, I am in a peck of trouble, and trust that you will be able to

suggest some way out of the difficulty. That disreputable woman after twenty years has swooped down upon me, and in my absence installed herself under my roof. You were mistaken about the death of the child. My God, he is here! Mrs. North is still in blissful ignorance of my former wife. You well know her mania.

(Enter Unity Jane, L.)

Unity.

Mr. North?

John North.

Well?

Unity.

There is somebody to the 'phone. They're in a awful hurry.

John North.

Hurry? I suppose so. Another man wanting to go to the pen, may be. (starts to exit but turns quickly to the desk and slips the unfinished letter into the folds of a newspaper lying on the desk. After which he makes a hurried exit, L.)

(Enter Mrs. North, R. with a newspaper in one hand and vase containing boquet in other.)

Mrs. North.

Unity Jane, how many times a day have I got to tell you about picking up the books and papers. I found this (exhibiting paper) right in the middle of the parlor floor. You are getting too shiftless to talk about, and I'm going to tell you now, that if you keep on reading them novels—trashy thing—you will go plumb crazy. You're so skeery now, that every time I step foot in the kitchen you jump clean off your feet.

Unity.

Well, wuzn't you a-readin' that "Fatal -

Mrs. North.

No I wasn't. I was merely a looking it over to see if it was fit for young girls to read. (goes to mantel and places vase and rearranges boquet) Ketch me wasting my time on such foolishness. (Unity picks up paper into which North placed his unfinished letter and instantly slips it into one of the drawers of the desk) Now go about the dinner and don't you let them potatoes burn. When they're done, call me for I want to cream them myself. (exit Unity, R. enter John North L. North on entering, observes the newspaper in Mrs North's

hand, and instantly glances at his desk. Not seeing the paper into which he had slipped his letter, he scrutinizes the paper in Mrs. North's hand.)

John North.

(showing nervousness) Mother — I — you — well — that — I was reading that paper.

Mrs. North.

(half in fear and staring at North) Why, are you sure?

John North.

(glancing back at the desk and then at the paper she holds) Yes—yes—you see I was reading—ah—reading—well, there were several things I was reading.

Mrs. North.

(amazed) Why, surely, John, this ain't the paper!

John North.

'(more excited) Yes — yes, that's it. All about liquid air. (Mrs. North starts to open paper) Oh! Oh! (snatches paper) You see, liquid air explodes. (Mrs. North stands transfixed. North holds the paper, keeping it tightly folded, then puts it in his coat pocket) I'm very much interested in the study of — of — of liquid air. It is really a great invention — discovery.

Mrs. North.

(aside, after studying North closely) The symptoms is getting worse!

Unity.

(through door, R. in a drawling tone) Mrs. North, the taters is burnin'.

Mrs. North

(starting to the door) Well, run quick, you lunk head! (North is seated at his desk. Mrs. North at door turns and looks at North just as he looks toward door to see if she is gone. As North turns back to desk, Mrs. North shakes her head slowly. Exit, R.)

(As Mrs. North disappears, North excitedly takes paper from pocket, partly unfolds it, and not finding the letter he continues to unfold becoming more excited each moment, finally unfolding the paper to its full size, catches it by the corners and shakes it violently—tearing it up.)

John North.

Gone! Gone! She's got it. What did I write? (scratches head and paces about room) The jig's up! It's done now!

I see my finish!

(Enter Johnny, L. very much under the influence of liquor and presenting a dilapidated appearance.)

Johnny.

Whoop! How are ye Guv.? How they comin'? (hic) I'm lookin' for Frenchy.

John North.

(in subdued tragic tone) You drunken vagabond! Not another word out of you! You get!

Johnny.

I'll spoil Frenchy's face. (reels)

John North.

Another sound and I'll ring for the police. Here, take this and go. (hands Johnny a dollar and siezes him by the shoulder, pushing him toward L. D., on reaching the door a burst of laughter from Colonal Barnaby and Mrs. Delmar is heard. North rushes Johnny toward R. D., when the voice of the Count is heard. Baffled in the attempt to get him out of the house unobserved, North runs Johnny about the room in desperation, finally hiding him behind the piano) Now don't you make a sound or you will be turned over to the coroner. (Johnny mumbles) Sh-h-h Silence!

(Enter Mrs. North, R. unobserved by North, who again roars over the piano, "Silence."

Mrs. North.

(gives a startled cry) Why, John! (seeing the torn paper on the floor) Looks like you had finished your liquid air piece.

John North.

(out of breath) Oh, Martha—I—you see—I hope you will not be too hasty with me. You should have known of this years ago. But—you see—I—couldn't—muster up the courage. I have been worse than a brute to keep you in ignorance—but just—consider—how—happy we've been—I'm sure—you'll forgive me when I explain fully. (glances at the piano in an agitated manner)

Mrs. North.

(apart) There he goes! His mind is wandering!

John North.

You will forgive me, won't you, dear?

Mrs. North.

(showing fright as she picks up and hurriedly deposits scraps of paper in the waste basket) Don't speak of it, John. It's most more than I can bear. (Unity throws open the folding doors, showing full set dinner table laid for six. doors C. L. and R., furnishings modern) Come now, John, dinner is ready. (enter Colonel Barnaby, Mrs. Delmar, the Count and Edith, L. While Mrs. North is seating the guests at table, North has gone to the piano and stands listening intently.

John North.

(apart) Asleep, thank God! The woman's bad enough, but oh, if she'd see him!

Mrs. North

(as North seats himself at the table) Mr. North is slightly undisposed today. His head has been aching him.

Mrs. Delmar.

Too much on his mind, perhaps.

John North.

I'm quite myself.

(Unity serves the soup, bringing two plates at a time.)

Mrs. Delmar.

Are we to hear the rest of that story, Count? I was more than interested in it.

Col. Barnaby.

Yes, proceed, Count. I am anxious to know how it all came out.

John North.

Yes, Count, we all like stories. Let's hear it. What's it about?

Count.

(to Edith) Perhaps Madamoiselle —

Edith.

Oh, I am more than interested.

Count.

(to North) Monsieur, I vas tell of my artist friend in Paris. (Johnny groans)

John North.

(aside) Oh, he'll break loose! (to Count) Yes—yes— Paris, éh? Is that where you came from? Count.

Paris? She is my home.

John North.

Don't suppose they speculate much in corner lots, do they, Count?

Count.

(perplexed) Ze lots, Monsieur? Zat ees, ze speculate?

Mrs. Delmar.

But, Count, we are waiting for the story.

Mrs. North.

Yes, don't let Mr. North switch you off onto town lots.

Count.

Ze artist I tell you of, is ze young man when I meet him—ah, so poor—

John North.

Poor was he, Count? Nothing funny about that!

Count.

Ah, so poor. He have no home. He is ill — so ill. It ees his head — ze fever — (Johnny mumbles)

John North.

(wildly) Crazy artist, eh? I suppose they have got big lunatic asylums in Paris. Ours are growing here—lack of sunshine. How's the weather in Paris, Count?

Count.

She is grand beyond compare.

Mrs. Delmar.

Then your friend was delirious from fever, Count?
Count.

Yes, madam — he ees vat you call — craze — out from his head —

John North.

That chap had a hard run of luck. It could have been worse, though.

Mrs. North.

And not a blessed soul to care for him I'll warrant.

Count.

Yes, zat ees where I was telling you—a beautiful girl found him lying in ze street, so ill—so ill— (Johnny groans)

John North.

(loudly) Ha! Ha! You don't say. (Count sits mute with astonishment, Mrs. North shows fear and humiliation, North, to hide his agitation eats hurriedly.)

Mrs. Delmar.

(after a painful silence) A beautiful girl found him, you say, Count?

Count.

Zat ees him—I mean zat ees her—ah—he find him about to die— (Johnny mutters)

Edith.

-(starting) What was that?

John North.

(more loudly) Poor devil, I hope he died. Earth's a vale of tears, at best. Go on, Count, that is the best story I've heard in a year. (Johnny mutters)

Mrs. North.

What's that noise?

Edith.

I heard a strange sound!

Col. Barnaby.

I certainly heard something.

Mrs. Delmar.

So did I.

John North.

(wildly) Heard nothing! You must be nervous. You all act crazy. What's the matter? Noises? I don't hear noises? What noises? Who said there were noises? (enter Unity, R. with dish of salad) What are we sitting here for? Why don't we eat? (All look at North in blank amazement. Unity is standing transfixed with eyes on the piano, and holding the dish of salad. The piano is seen to move. Unity screams and drops the salad as Johnny staggers out from behind the piano. All at the table spring to their feet.)

Johnny.

Dere's de bloke of a Frenchman! (starts toward the Count)

Count.

Mon Dieu! Ze imbecile! He will kill me! Help! Police!

(Unity crawls under the table. All the women scream. The Count gets on the opposite side of the table from Johnny. Mrs. Delmar pretends to faint in the Colonel's arms. North siezes Johnny by the collar and places his hand over Johnny's mouth and drags him toward left.)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

Scene 1. Same as act II. Lights burning. North smoking a cigar and reading the evening paper; seated in easy chair, he appears perfectly composed. (enter Mrs. Delmar dressed for the street.)

Mrs. Delmar.

Oh, have I really found you alone?

John North.

(calm and sarcastic) Yes, Madam, I am alone, and so far as you are concerned, I prefer to be alone. (continues his reading)

Mrs. Delmar.

Well, that is just exactly what I wish to discuss.

John North.

You will discuss nothing with me.

Mrs. Delmar.

Oh, come now! Do not be foolish! You certainly realize your present position. (Mrs. Delmar waits for him to answer, but he ignores her) Well, what is your peace of mind worth to you, anyway?

John North.

My mind is a great deal more at peace than yours will be in a very short time.

Mrs. Delmar.

Oh, I don't know.

John North.

But I do.

Mrs. Delmar.

But you have not answered my question Have I made it interesting to you long enough? Has the entertainment been up to the standard? At dinner this evening you did the part beautifully. Now, what will you give me to close my engagement? (North goes on reading and smoking) John, I am waiting. What does the nominee for Governor intend to give me?

John North.

(looking at watch) Just five minutes.

Mrs. Delmar.

Don't be facetious. My quiet departure from Seattle would be worth a great deal to you. Silence is golden. (North reads unconcernedly) Now is the time for you to put up. Johnny must be gotten out of jail.

John North.

He is safe there. The doors are strong.

Mrs. Delmar.

Have you considered what it means to you?—the exposure that is bound to follow?

John North.

(looking at his watch) The five minutes will soon be up. If by that time you are not out of this house, I shall ring for the police. Madam, your scheme of blackmail is at an end. That galoot can stay in jail until the earth crumbles into small atoms. (smokes complacently)

Mrs. Delmar.

Now think what you are saying. See! (exhibiting manuscript) I have my story all ready. It will look well in print. I can easily sell it to the Herald for a thousand. Don't you think it worth that much to you? (North reads without replying) The public always enjoys a bit of scandal.

John North.

Madam, you are wasting your breath, and the time draws near.

Mrs. Delmar.

(reading from manuscript) "Hon. John North's deserted wife arrives in Seattle." (to North) Sounds well, doesn't it? Most interesting reading for the intelligent voter, eh, John? (North does not reply) Then, too, there is your wife and daughter. (North is still silent. After a pause) A little more of your insolence and you haven't the price of my silence. Your wife shall know all. A thousand dollars now or never.

John North.

Never! Mrs. North knows all.

Mrs. Delmar.

(with astonishment) You told her? John North.

Mrs. North knows all. (looks at his watch, rises slowly, drops paper on floor and walks toward L.)

Mrs. Delmar.

Well, what do you intend to do?

John North.

(calmly) Ring for the police.

Mrs. Delmar.

Oh, you — you beast! (walks hurriedly toward C.) You will pay for your insolence! (exit Mrs. Delmar.)

(North walks toward C. looking out. Enter Unity, not seeing North. Her eyes fall upon the paper North has dropped. She immediately picks it up and puts it into the drawer of the desk. North coming down as she is closing the drawer.)

John North.

Here! (Unity jumps, throws her hands over her head and screams) For heaven's sake, what ails you?

Unity.

Oh, sir, I thought it was another burgarlar.

John North.

Well, don't be foolish. Now you get that paper. (Unity turns and takes paper from the drawer into which she had placed the paper which contained the letter) I was reading that paper. What do you want in here?

Unity.

A b-o-o-k. (Mrs. North calls, R.)

John North.

Mrs. North is calling you. (exit Unity, R. North seats himself and unfolds his paper. The letter falls into his lap. North picking up the letter stares at it in blank amazement.) Great Scott! That infernal letter! Martha don't know a thing, and that cussed woman has gone to give it all away to the Herald. Now I have done it! (rises and paces the floor. Enter Colonel Barnaby dressed in street attire and showing anger.)

Col. Barnaby.

John North, the blood of a soldier boils within me—boils within me!

John North.

Let her boil, Henry.

Col. Barnaby.

Do you realize that you have turned out of doors my affianced wife? What explanation have you to offer for your unwarranted conduct?

John North.

Henry, I have no time to waste words. I've put her out and out she'll stay.

Col. Barnaby.

It is well that I have control of my temper. Because she has spurned your attentions you, in your jealous anger, drive her from your door.

John North.

Jealous — hell! I know that woman better than you do.

Col. Barnaby.

Better than I do? What do you mean?

John North.

I guess that I lived with her long enough — that is — I mean — I've seen enough of her since she has been under this roof.

Col. Barnaby.

Provoke me no further. I shall pack my trunk — (North pays no heed but stands with knitted brow and running his hand through his hair) I shall pack my trunk — (Colonel moving to R. D. rear.) Pack my trunk — (North making no reply, the Colonel bolts out R. D.)

(Enter Edith and Mrs. North, R. F. D. North still stands in a brown study. Mrs. North wears a white bandage about her head. She looks at North sadly for a moment.)

Mrs. North.

John?

John North.

(starting suddenly) Oh! Yes! Mother, how is your head by this time?

Mrs. North.

(sinking into chair) I think I am getting over the shock, some.

Edith.

That horrid burglar! (enter Unity, L. D.)

Unity.

Mr. N-o-r-t-h, the telegram boy is to the d-o-o-r.

Edith.

Telegram!

John North.

Don't get scared! An application for the wardenship—(exit North, L. D. Mrs. North seeing newspaper lying on the floor.)

Mrs. North.

Unity?

Unity.

M-a-? (Mrs. North points to paper which Unity picks up) That makes about ten times today. I never saw the — Oh, Edith, my head — my head! (exit Unity with paper, L.)

Edith.

Oh, mamma, you should not mind about the old papers. Lay your head back against the chair and be comfortable.

Mrs. North

Oh, Edith, it ain't my head alone. It's my heart.

Edith.

I thought there was something more—I'm so sorry—I—Mrs. North.

Edith, I think it's time that you knew —

Edith.

Why, mamma, is it something so terrible?

Mrs. North.

Yes, child, the worst it could be.

Edith.

(alarmed) Why, mamma!

Mrs. North.

(trying to control herself) Yes, it's worse than death.

Edith.

Why, mamma, you frighten me!

Mrs. North.

(half crying) Well — your — father —

Edith.

Yes — yes.

Mrs. North.

Edith, ain't you noticed nothing?

Edith.

Well I — what do you mean?

Mrs. North.

At the dinner table tonight, didn't you notice how dreadful your Pa acted up?

Edith.

Oh, mamma, will we ever get over that dinner?

Mrs. North.

I could a sunk through the floor. You know Edith, that wasn't like him. He ain't been his self since he was nominated. And didn't you notice when we came into the room just now, how addled he was?

Edith.

Why — yes — that's so, he did act strangely.

Mrs. North.

And you know how his head has been aching him?

Edith.

Yes.

Mrs. North.

Don't you know them's the very symptoms?

Edith.

Symptoms! Symptoms of what?

Mrs. North.

(with emotion) Insanity!

Edith.

Oh, mamma, you don't think —

Mrs. North.

(sobbing) Yes, Edith, he's as crazy as a bed bug. (enter North, L. D, reading telegram) You leave us alone, I want to talk to him. (exit Edith, R D.)

John North.

(reading telegram aloud) "Are you ready to formally open campaign? Advise- Jones." (apart) Formally open campaign! Nice predicament in which to open a campaign! Tomorrow's Herald will do that. (to Mrs. North) Nothing alarming, Martha! Just a wire from the chairman of the State Central Committee. (seats himself beside Mrs. North. There is an awkward silence. North betrays anxiety and Mrs. North mingled grief and fear.)

Mrs. North.

(with feeling) John, don't you think you had best give it all up?

John North.

Give what up?

Mrs. North

All this politics.

John North.

(with deep breath) Well, Martha, I don't know but what I do.

Mrs. North.

John, I can see you're a failing every hour. Now won't you let me send for the doctor.

John North.

The doctor?

Mrs. North.

You know it's always best to take these things on the start. Do you—er—are you still muddled in your head?

John North.

No, things have cleared a good deal in the last hour.

Mrs. North.

You mean you don't feel so queer?

John North.

Well, you see, Martha — that is — there is — well — there's something I should have told you years ago — before we were married.

Mrs. North.

(apart) I'm right — heredity! (to North) You don't mean it's in the family — a family trouble?

John North.

Yes, that's it — that's it — a family trouble. (Mrs. North begins to sob) Oh, Martha, I've been a coward! I know I've been a brute, but I just couldn't tell it. I wanted to forget it. I didn't want to believe it myself.

Mrs. North.

Was it on your father or mother's side?

John North.

Oh, Martha, if I only was crazy as you think I am, it would not be half so bad.

Mrs. North.

Oh, don't say that, John! I know you don't realize nothing. You can't see how you've acted up in the last two days. Now, be reasonable! Be doctored for it now. I could stand anything, John, but to have you crazy for the rest of your 'life—anything!

John North.

Even a divorced man?

Mrs. North.

Yes, John, if I was sure you ain't crazy, I would be the happiest woman in Seattle, even if you'd tell me this minute you'd been divorced a dozen times.

John North.

Only once, Martha.

Mrs. North.

(staring) Eh? (after a pause) Are you sure you know what you are saying?

John North.

Yes, only once. Martha, I have deceived you. (enter Colonel R. D. rear. He carries two large valises. His vest is partly unbuttoned, his necktie disarranged and silk hat on the back of his head and his face red as from exertion.)

Mrs. North.

(breathless) You — another wife —

John North.

When I was a mere boy.

Mrs. North.

Why, John — who?

John North.

Helen Delmar!

(Colonel drops both valises and Mrs. North stares at John in speechless amazement.)

Col. Barnaby.

My God, John!

John North.

Now, Martha, is it clear to you? Wasn't it enough to drive me crazy. And here is Henry, bound to marry her.

Col. Barnaby.

Well, I'll be hanged if I ever!

Mrs. North.

John, why in the name of common sense, didn't you tell me this, long ago?

John North.

Tell you, with you thinking every divorced man ought to go to jail?

Mrs. North.

(tenderly) Well, I don't blame you none. But I'll bet I make her git up and dust.

John North.

Be calm, Martha. She has gone, I fired her out. Wanted a thousand dollars hush money.

Mrs. North.

Well, I'd see myself — trollop! (exit Colonel sheepishly, R. D., carrying both valises.)

John North.

She's made for the Herald office - says she'll publish it.

Mrs. North.

(alarmed) Print it in the paper?

John North.

Yes, to defeat me politically.

Mrs. North.

Oh, John, the whole town will know it.

John North.

Yes, the whole State.

Mrs. North.

Can't you stop it? Hurry John, quick. Give her a thousand—give her five thousand!

John North.

(rushing L. D.) I'll get my coat. (exit)

Mrs. North.

(wringing her hands) Oh, run, run! The Count will hear of it. (enter Dale, C. out of breath and excited. Mrs. North glares at him and he is embarassed.)

Charles Dale.

(after an awkward pause) I beg your pardon, Mrs. North, for this seeming intrusion, but I must see Mr. North immediately. I—that is—is he in? (enter North, I. putting on his coat)

John North.

Ah, Dale!

Charles Dale.

(handing North manuscript) Mr. North. (North examining it)

John North.

Why! Dale! How did you get possession of this?

Charles Dale.

A few minutes ago a woman came into the Herald office and asked for the editor; as Mr. Wade was not in, I represented him. She had a story to sell. I bought it. She was in such a hurry to catch the outgoing Oriental Liner that she did not hesitate to accept all I could dig up. I believe she is the notorious blackmailer that the detectives have traced to this city.

John North.

(siezing Dale's hand) You're a brick! Spent vour own money. I'll make you warden — (to Mrs. North) Why, Martha, this boy has saved us. (to Dale) I can never live long enough to repay you.

Charles Dale.

It was no more than any true friend would do. (enter Colonel, R. D.)

Mrs. North.

Yes, we're much obliged. I appreciate it (enter Edith, R.) and hereafter you can just consider yourself like one of the family.

Charles Dale.

Thank you, Mrs. North. (Dale turns to Edith and she gives him her hand. They engage in mock conversation.)

Col. Barnaby.

(to North and Mrs. North) I am out a hundred and fifty dollar diamond ring.

John North.

How about your wings, Henry? Sufficiently singed? Col. Barnaby.

(meekly) Don't mention it. John, I really owe you an apology. (shakes John's hand)

Charles Dale.

(to Edith) Oh, I don't think he meant to burglarize. He's a harmless hobo. Old Mike Smith's boy!

John North.

Eh? What's that? — who's boy?

Charles Dale.

Old Smith's — lives on the water front.

John North.

Whoop! (starts toward L.)

Mrs. North.

John, where are you going?

John North.

To wire Jones, that I am ready to formally open the campaign.

CURTAIN.





















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